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be present; so when I saw the four priests arriving I followed with the crowd.

"The bell was suspended at about the height of a man from the ground, and was modestly robed in white muslin, ornamented with bows of ribbon; it was immediately surrounded by the four officiating priests, and behind these the spectators ranged themselves.

"The dean began at once to chaunt, in a nasal and lazy tone of voice, the 51st psalm—'Miserere mei,' the other priests responding to him; they appeared to personate the bell, and prayed the 'Lord to have mercy on it'—that he would 'wash it thoroughly from its iniquity'—that he would pardon it 'though shapen in iniquity'—that he would 'create in it a clean heart'—that he would 'restore to it the joy of his salvation.' Such are the expressions of the psalm. Happily none of the persons present (myself excepted) understood one word of all this—(such at least was the conclusion forced upon me by the listless expression of their countenances); and now I seemed in some degree to understand why Rome insists upon speaking Latin to the faithful. She thus induces them to accept, as acts of piety, things which, if spoken in good plain French, would appear no better than words of profane folly.

"As soon as the recitation of the Miserere was over a priest washed the bell, and wiped it very carefully both within and without, whilst the other priests continued to chaunt in Latin, in the same monotonous manner. Then the dean made the sign of the cross, in several places, all round the bell, and pronounced a Latin formula, of which this is a translation—'Be thou consecrated in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to the honour of the Blessed, Mary always a virgin.' After this came the confirmation; and here a little incident occurred which amused the audience. The bit of cotton wool required to wipe up the sacred oil being wanting, one of the spectators hastily took off his hat and tore off as much of the beaver as was required for the completion of the ceremony. The blessed bell had still to inhale the perfume of the incense, which a child, belonging to the choir, waived up and down before it. It must also resound to the nine strokes given to it, at three separate intervals, by its godfather and godmother! and then, finally, it must listen to the litanies of the Virgin, after which the dean declared the ceremony was completed, and pronounced, with an air of satisfaction, and in the vulgar tongue, these words—'May you all hear this bell for many years.'

"The spectators, who had scarcely succeeded in remaining serious whilst the service was going on, now gave full way to their mirth, and retired laughing and ridiculing the whole affair! And this is what Rome calls a religious ceremony.

"For myself I left the place full of indignation. The priest of our parish is a young man, and but lately entered on his sacerdotal office; and I had observed, that during the service his features expressed deep seriousness and some degree of emotion, whilst the countenances of the others remained unmoved and listless. After having reflected upon this, I decided upon making an appeal to his conscience, and with this view I addressed to him the following letter:—

"**MONSIEUR LE CURE.**—Curiosity induced me to be present, the other day, at the baptism of the new bell for this parish; it was the first time I had ever had an opportunity of witnessing such a ceremony, and I wished to judge, by personal observation, how far it agreed with what I had read on the subject; and now I feel as it were my duty to tell you how much I was shocked at what I then saw and heard. My common sense and my conscience were alike outraged at such a profanation of sacred things. To baptize a piece of metal—what folly! To apply to a bell the magnificent words of the "Miserere"—to ask for it a "clean heart and right spirit"—what a detestable mockery!! Sir, I cannot imagine how a serious-minded man, such as I wish to consider you, could celebrate, without shame and remorse, such a mystery of iniquity. If you could have perceived the irreverent attitudes of your people during this solemn farce—if you could have marked, as I did, their ill-concealed laughter, heard their jocose remarks, you would no longer mistake the tendency of such deplorable ceremonies. It is thus that men are turned into profane mockers. How easily might the defenders of Paganism have retorted the sarcasms of Justin, of Tertullian, of Origen, and of others, if they could have pointed to the practice of such gross absurdities among the Christians. When the ceremony was over your brethren may have laughed at the miserable folly which they had just enacted. And I know enough of the Roman clergy to be aware how many of them view their mysteries in private; but you, sir, are still young, your conscience has not yet been seared by the prolonged practice of such Roman puerilities! I beseech you, therefore, to make use of the Gospel—test and judge of the tree by its fruit—and ask yourself, as in the presence of that God who shall be so soon our judge, whether a Church which commands observances so manifestly impious and absurd, can, in very deed, be the bride and faithful spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do not shut your eyes, under the pretext that others must answer for you; for it is written—*Every man must bear his own burden.* If your Church should

be deceiving herself, then you who belong to her, and uphold her errors—you, I say, shall perish with her.

"I beseech you, dear sir, to see nothing in this letter (perhaps severe) but the expression of the affectionate compassion which has dictated it. I feel called upon to warn you, before it be too late, of the danger you are incurring. May God grant that these few lines may find an entrance into your heart. I desire most sincerely that it may be so; but whatever may be the result,

"I am, yours faithfully,

"D. J., Minister of the Gospel."

"I am ignorant of what effect this warning may have produced; but I leave the result to him who has said—'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days'—Eccles. xi. 1.

"A few words, and I have done. I remarked, that in consecrating this bell they had asked God to make it a means 'to excite the piety of the faithful,' to 'draw down blessings upon the fields,' to 'break the force of tempests, and to disperse the lightnings.' It is not very easy to imagine what may be the connection between the sound of a bell and the exercise of Christian piety, or the blessing of God upon the fields; but the petition, with regard to the thunder and lightning, is in manifest contradiction to the physical laws which regulate this phenomenon.

"Every person of education knows, that the vibration of a metallic substance would rather tend to hasten than to avert such an explosion—so much so, that in some places magistrates prohibit the ringing of church bells during the prevalence of storms. Unfortunately for the infallible Church, she composed this portion of her liturgy at a period when the universal ignorance of physical science may have accounted for thus consecrating a popular superstition; but now, as she will not acknowledge herself in error on a single point, she is compelled to shut her eyes to the light, and to persevere in asking from God, in Latin! things which she dare not express to her fellow-men in French!! A priest must occasionally feel sorely perplexed, when he finds himself constrained to offer up prayers which he knows contain a tissue of absurdities. I am somewhat curious to know how intelligent Romanists reconcile such facts, with a belief in the infallibility of their Church. It is quite evident that the baptism of bells can have no rational significance in a Christian point of view. It is impossible to give it a place in a religion whose chief characteristic is, that it is 'spirit and truth'; and it is equally difficult to assign it a place upon the score of common sense, as it is opposed to the true nature of things.

"Nevertheless, if the antiquity of an error render it acceptable, we may concede to this our own show of respect, and perhaps this is what the Church of Rome feels. In truth, the baptism of bells is more ancient than the Apostles, and may be traced up to their heathen cotemporaries; but as bells were unknown at that period, they made use of trumpets, which they consecrated and purified with the 'Lustral water,' (the holy water of the Pagans). The day of such a consecration was termed 'Tubilustrum,' as may be seen in the fifth book of Ovid *Pastorum*, 725. When the Church became lukewarm and worldly, she sought to make converts from among the heathen, by borrowing from them their idolatrous rites, and adapting them as much as possible to her own use. This was done at first in simplicity, and without suspecting how grievously it must undermine true piety.

"Among some others, equally absurd, the baptism of bells formed a place, and it will probably retain it as long as the Church of Rome endures: for she has adopted for her motto the famous saying of the Jesuit—'Let her be as she is, or let her not be at all!'

"But let us, my brethren, give our God 'no rest' until we have 'destroyed the covering cast over the people'—until he have bestowed upon us the power to bear a faithful testimony to this 'corrupt and perverse generation,' so that 'perhaps we may have some.' I should be only too happy if these few remarks might contribute to such an end.

"Believe me to be, &c.,

"D. J., Minister."

THE RULE OF FAITH.

(Continued from vol. I., p. 138.)

II. The second argument adduced by Roman Catholic divines in support of Tradition is this, that without it the canonicity and inspiration of the books of Scripture cannot be established: in other words, the authority of the Church is necessary, in order to determine what is genuine Scripture⁽²²⁾. In order to render this

(22) This is the form into which the argument is generally thrown by the more moderate divines of the Romish communion. The ultramontane writers, however, take more decided ground, and assert that the *canon of Scripture rests entirely on the authority of the Church of Rome*. "The Church [of Rome] can give canonical authority," says Pighius (Hier. iii. 3), "to books which have no such authority from themselves or their authors." Stapleton asserts the same, *Rel. Contr.* 5. qu. 2. art. 4. And the Roman professor Peronne thus writes (*Prol. Theol.* ii. p. 1051-2, Ed. Paris)—"The Roman Church, being the mother and mistress of Churches, had power to constitute the true canon of Scripture." This notion originated as early as the eleventh

proof as complete as possible, modern theologians of the Romish communion maintain further, that the books of the New Testament were not generally received as inspired by the Christian Church till the *fourth century* after Christ⁽²³⁾; and that the Roman Church then, by its plenary authority, determined which books were canonical Scripture and which were not. So that during the first three centuries immediately subsequent to the Apostolic age, there was no distinct knowledge of what was Scripture and what was not; which, of course, could not have been permitted by God, if the written Word were intended to be the sole and sufficient Rule of Christian Faith. The inconsistency of Protestants is also triumphantly held up to ridicule, who, whilst they profess to appeal solely to Scripture, are not able to tell what Scripture is without the aid of the very Tradition which they ostentatiously reject. Now, this famous argument, which is styled by Eckius (*Enchirid.* p. 7) "*Achilles pro Catholicis*," plausible as it may appear, admits an easy answer. The Church of England admits—nay, appeals to, the testimony, not indeed of the *Roman* Church, but of the *Church universal*, from the first age of Christianity to the present hour, as a proof of the canonicity and inspiration of the Scriptures. "In the name of the Holy Scriptures," she says in her Sixth Article, "we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church"⁽²⁴⁾. We have an unbroken chain of incontrovertible evidence, ascending to the very age in which the New Testament Scriptures (with which we are now specially concerned) were penned, that the word contained in them was received by the Catholic Church, "not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God"⁽²⁵⁾. The testimony of the *primitive* Church upon this point is as conclusive evidence of the Divine origin of Scripture as any human testimony can well be conceived to be. The case stands thus: We have a number of writings professing to be inspired⁽²⁶⁾. These writings contain accounts of miracles stated to have been wrought by their authors—that is, their authors are represented as performing the very acts by which Divine inspiration is proved—"God also bearing them witness by signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost"—Heb. ii. 4. These writings were received as inspired, and publicly read as such, by large congregations of persons living at *that very time*, and in *those very places*, in which those proofs of inspiration are affirmed to have been given by the authors⁽²⁷⁾. The reception and canonization of these writings by the whole or greater part of the Church⁽²⁸⁾, under such circumstances, is, therefore, justly regarded by the Church of England as *one of the most irrefragable proofs of their inspiration*. This *historical* testimony is, for the most part, similar to that by which we prove

century. One of the dictates of Pope Gregory VII. is, that "No book or chapter is to be regarded as canonical without the Pope's authority."—See Baron. Ann. Eccl. ad A.D. 10. 8.

(23) So, e. g., Milner, *End of Controv.*, Letter xi. Newman, *Development*, p. 160, descends a century lower. "On what ground do we receive the canon as it comes to us but on the authority of the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries? The Church of that era decided—not merely bore testimony, but passed a judgment on former testimony—decided that certain books were of authority." Mr. Newman's special object in maintaining this doctrine is plain: for if the Scriptures were not acknowledged to be the genuine Word of God till the fourth century after Christ, it would be a remarkable instance of a new law of faith and practice emerging long after the Apostolic age. And we should be unable to assign any limit to the process of development, both dogmatical and practical, with so striking an example of it before us as the *divinization* of books more than three centuries after their composition.

(24) The importance of the testimony of the primitive Church, in establishing the genuineness and authenticity of the Books of Scripture, is also fully recognised by the ablest divines of the Church of England. It will be enough to name Hooker, Whitaker, Field, Laud, Chillingworth, Lardner, Peckey, Marsh, &c.

(25) The reception of the New Testament Scriptures as the Word of God by the primitive Church is guaranteed by irrefragable proofs. We have not only a continued succession of writers, by whom various portions are quoted, but we have catalogues of the entire, drawn up by individuals (who derived their knowledge from their forefathers), and confirmed by Councils. The constancy of martyrs—the fury of persecutors—the fraud of heretics—all tend to establish the fact, that these Scriptures were regarded as the genuine Word of God.

(26) 1 Cor. ii. 4-13; vii. 40; xiv. 36, 37. 1 Th. i. 5; ii. 13. Gal. i. 11, 12, compared with 2 Tim. iii. 16. Eph. iii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 12; iv. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 2. Apoc. iii. 6.

(27) The Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke form no real exception to this, as the primitive Church generally believed the former to have been written under the direction of St. Peter, and the latter under that of St. Paul.

(28) Some books of the New Testament—the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and the Apocalypse—though generally received, were not *universally* recognised as canonical so late as the time of the historian Eusebius—i. e., the beginning of the fourth century.—Euseb. E. H. iii. 8, 25. He calls them *ἀντιλεγόμενα*, or "spoken against," in contradistinction to the *ὁμολογούμενα*, or "universally received." The fact of some few persons entertaining doubts respecting the genuineness of the books just mentioned, is so far from weakening our belief in the canon that it rather confirms it, because it proves what extreme caution was exercised in admitting writings into it.

the genuineness of every ancient book, only far more complete and convincing. But whilst we do not hesitate to confess that we have received the Scriptures from God through the ministry of his one Catholic and Apostolic Church, and that she bears invaluable testimony to their authenticity, we are equally resolute in maintaining that the Scriptures are not the Word of the Church, but the Word of God, and that they owe their authority not to her but to Him. We acknowledge her to be the "witness and keeper of Holy Writ," but we deny her to be its "judge." Again, however valuable the testimony of the Church may be, it is not the only evidence of the authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament Scriptures. We are not entirely dependent, as the Roman Catholic argument assumes, on the Church for our knowledge of what is Scripture. There is a wholly independent head of proof, which, the more it is examined, becomes more copious, complete, and convincing—we mean the internal evidence furnished by the writings themselves. The more we study and examine them, the more we are convinced—by the harmony of their parts with each other and with the Old Testament, by the majestic simplicity of their composition, by the Divine purity and sublimity of their doctrines, by the loveliness and noble comprehensiveness of their morality, to which we may add the wonderful effects which they have produced on the condition of the world, and the series of providential interferences by which they have been preserved and diffused—that the Scriptures are not the words of man but of God, and that they are the full and sufficient deposit of that Divine revelation to which the Church owes her existence, and on which she depends for her preservation. Led by the Church, in the first instance, to the Scriptures, we examine them for ourselves, and we say to her as the Samaritans said to the woman—"We now believe, not (no longer, *οὐκέτι*) for thy saying, for we ourselves have heard him, and know that this is, indeed, the Saviour of the world."—John iv. 42. We believe, in accordance with our Lord's words—"If any man will do the will of him, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God" (John vii. 17)—that to the humble and sober-minded individual Christian no proof of the Divine origin of the Scriptures will be more convincing than the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit whose word they are (32).

III. But it is maintained, in the third place, that, even though Scripture were allowed to contain all things necessary for salvation, yet, as it is difficult, obscure, and likely to be misunderstood (33), therefore (unless we are prepared to admit that God designed his Word to be an endless source of doubt and disputation) Tradition is requisite to determine its meaning; or, as it has been otherwise expressed, in order that the Scriptures should be a revelation to us, there is need of an authorized, visible, living, infallible, interpreter and guide, scilicet the Catholic Church (34). "Between Scripture and the individual reader of it there yawns," says an eminent Roman Catholic theologian (35), "an immense abyss." In proof of the difficulty and obscurity of Scripture we are reminded of the profoundly mysterious truths which it reveals, and of the numerous sources of error connected with the mode in which they are transmitted (36). The authority of Scripture itself is appealed to on the point—e. g., the statement of St. Peter respecting the Epistles of St. Paul (1 Peter iii. 16); the fact of our blessed Lord opening the understanding of the disciples, that they might understand those Scriptures relating to himself, which he had just appealed to (Luke xxiv. 44, 45); and such passages in the Old Testament as Ps. cxviii. (Eng. Ver. cxix.) 34.

(29) Some Protestants have been content to rest the authority of the Scriptures of the New Testament solely on the internal evidence, especially on the witness which the Spirit bears with our own spirits that they are the Word of God. The framers of the *Belgic* and *Gallie* confessions were of this opinion. The Church of England, aware of the danger of making our own private persuasions the sole standard of inspired truth, and bearing in mind that there is scarcely any religion in the world which has not its own sacred books, which its votaries receive as inspired, has wisely insisted on the importance of the external evidence.

(30) Chemnitz (*Exam. Conc. Trid.*, p. 13) says, that Eekius, Emser, and the first writers against the Reformation, did not refuse to argue from Scripture; but Pighius, finding this detrimental to his cause, invented the mode of arguing from the insufficiency, obscurity, and ambiguity of Scripture for the absolute necessity of unwritten Tradition; in which he was followed by all the Roman theologians.

(31) See the remarks of the Archbishop of Dublin, in our 1st vol., p. 8, col. i.

(32) Möhler, *Symbolik*.

(33) For example, the variations of texts and versions are urged by Roman Catholic divines as an argument to prove the necessity of relying entirely on the existing Church for the meaning of Scripture. The following is the reply to these objections, as employed by *infidels*, given by the famous Bossuet—"Will any one say that it is not certain that from all these versions, and from all these texts, there will always result the same laws, the same miracles, the same prophecies, the same history, the same body of doctrine, and, in short, the same substance? What more do we want than this immovable basis of the sacred books, and what more could we demand from Divine Providence?"—Bossuet, *Hist. Univ.*, t. ii., p. 193. The same answer will serve against the same objections, when urged by Roman Catholics.

The Fathers also are cited in support of the same position (34). Thus, passages from Irenæus, Cyprian, and Augustine are brought forward, in which the origin and growth of heresies are ascribed to false interpretations of the Scriptures (35). And, lastly, we are pressed with an *argum. ad hominem*, derived from the admission of Protestants themselves, respecting the great difficulties of the written Word. Now, in reply to all this we answer in general, that we do not deny, but freely admit, that Holy Scripture contains many things both difficult and obscure, and that, unless it be studied in a spirit of docility and prayerfulness, of sobriety and caution, it may lead, as it unfortunately has too often led, into dangerous and fatal errors. We admit that the exposure of Christians to these dangers, and the necessity for constant watchfulness, in order to escape them, is far from what we would naturally wish, and from what we would, at first sight, think probable in a revelation from God. But upon a little reflection we find that God has not, in the most essential matters connected with our present life and temporal well-being, seen fit to protect us from the risk of falling into dangerous and even fatal mistakes: but that, on the contrary, caution, prudence, and circumspection are, in general, absolutely necessary to insure our worldly prosperity and comfort. It is not difficult, moreover, to see that the very same line of argument which would prove the necessity of an infallible expositor of all the difficulties of Scripture would equally prove that no such difficulties could exist at all; just as the assumed necessity of a universal and infallible remedy for all diseases, would lead to the conclusion that no such thing as disease ought to exist. Nothing can be more hazardous than arguing from our own notions of what ought to be, to the necessity of the Most High acting in such or such a manner; because the direct tendency of such speculations is not only to make a man an infidel, as respects the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, but to lead him, if he consistently follows out his principles, to downright Atheism. Our general answer, then, to the presumed necessity of an infallible interpretation of Scripture—whether in the form of divine, unwritten Tradition, or of the inherent infallibility of the existing Catholic Church—is this, that, even though the difficulties of Scripture were tenfold what they are, it would be in the highest degree presumptuous and hazardous for us to conclude, that the permission of such difficulties and apparent imperfections in revelation is inconsistent with God's character, or with his purposes in reference to mankind; and that he must, accordingly, have provided some remedy for them, some infallible tribunal by which all perplexing questions might be resolved.

But, in fact, when we examine more closely into the alleged difficulties and obscurities of Scripture, we find that they are of such a nature that they do not concern our practice, or the duties which we owe either to God or to each other. The side of Christianity which looks towards us, and with which alone we are properly concerned, is plain and easy of comprehension to every honest and humble inquirer after truth. Love to God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the one perfect and sufficient atonement for the sins of the world, and in the Eternal Spirit, as the sanctifier of all them that believe in Jesus; this, with purity of life and love to our neighbour, stands inscribed so plainly on the page of Scripture that he who runs may read. The Church of England accordingly invites her children to a sober and humble study of the Scriptures, in order to find in them a full authority for all she teaches in her Catechism and other elementary guides to the knowledge of the truth. The writings of the Fathers, again, are replete with passages in which the plainness and simplicity of Holy Scripture (under this aspect) are declared. Thus Augustine says—"God hath made the Scriptures to stoop to the capacity of babes and sucklings" (36). Chrysostom says—"For what necessity is there of a discourse? All things are plain and simple in the Holy Scriptures; all things necessary are evident" (37). And again—"The Apostles and Prophets have acted entirely differently [from the Philosophers]; for they, as the common teachers of the world, have made everything proceeding from them plain and evident to all, in order that each person, even by himself, may be able to learn what is said of it from the mere reading of it" (38).

(34) See, especially, Bellarmine, *de Verb. Dei*, lib. iii. c. 1 Bonfrere, *Præloquia*, cap. ix. sec. 2.

(35) Irenæus, *Cont. Hæres.* ii. 12. Cyprian, *de Unit. Eccl.*, p. 198. Ed. Bened. August. *Tract.* xviii., in Johan.

(36) Inclinauit ergo Scripturas Deus usque ad infantum et lactentium capacitates.—Aug. *Enarr.* in Psal. viii. 8.

(37) Διὰ τὴν γὰρ ὁμιλίαν χρειαί; πάντα σαφὴ καὶ εὐθέα τὰ παρὰ ταῖς θείαις γραφαῖς πάντα τὰ ἀναγκαῖα δῆλα.—Hom. iii. in 2 Thess. t. xi. p. 528. Ed. Ben. Peronne (*Prel. Theol.* ii. p. 1119) tells us that Chrysostom here uses "a certain amplification;" but this mode of getting rid of a troublesome passage is more expeditious than satisfactory.

(38) οἱ δὲ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ προφῆται τοὺς ἀντιπρὸς ἡμᾶς, σαφὴ γὰρ καὶ δῆλα τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐκτίστησαν ἅπαντα, ὥστε κοινὸι τῆς οἰκουμένης ὄντες διδάσκαλοι, ἵνα ἕκαστος καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ μαθηταῖν δύνηται ἐκ τῆς ἀκατάσχετης μόνης τὰ λεγόμενα.—Hom. iii. de Lazar. t. i. p. 739.

The acknowledged difficulties of Scripture, again, are of various kinds, for none of which, however, is the interposition of an infallible interpreter needed. There are, in the first place, difficulties connected with the triune nature of God; with the incarnation of the Redeemer; with the origin of evil, &c., considered as speculative truths. Difficulties of this kind transcend the power of our faculties even to comprehend, so that no interpreter of Scripture, however infallible, could possibly remove them. These, and such like, are "secret things, which belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. xxx. 29), and, in respect to us, are "occasions of humility, arguments of forbearance and mutual toleration, and an endearment of reverence and adoration" (39). There are, in the second place, difficulties and obscurities in Scripture which only need for their removal a careful study of the Divine Oracles, and a comparison of Scripture with Scripture (40). Every difficulty removed in this way enlarges our conception of, and strengthens our faith in the wisdom and perfection of the great scheme of providence and grace revealed in the Bible, and is, therefore, at once a delightful and most profitable occupation of the mind. But no infallible interpreter, other than Scripture itself, is here required. To this class of difficulties, likewise, numerous passages in the writings of the Fathers refer. Thus Clemens Alexandrinus, speaking of the true mode of ascertaining the sense of Scripture, says—"The truth is discovered also by confirming each of the points, which are demonstrated in accordance with the Scriptures, by similar Scriptures" (41). And Augustine uses the following remarkable words—"Magnificently, therefore, and wholesomely, has the Holy Spirit so fashioned the sacred Scriptures, that by the more open passages provision is made for our hunger, and by the more obscure a feeling of satiety is prevented. For nothing almost is drawn forth from those more obscure places, which may not be found most plainly spoken elsewhere" (42). Exactly to the same effect writes Irenæus, c. Hæres. lib. ii., c. 47; as also Basil, *Ascet.*, Quæst. 267. There are, lastly, difficulties and obscurities which depend for their explanation upon various branches of human learning—such as skill in the original languages in which the Sacred Books are written, knowledge of the contemporary history, acquaintance with ecclesiastical archaeology, and with the customs, modes of thought, &c., of those by whom the various parts of Scripture were written, and of those to whom they were addressed. All this requires not the interposition of an infallible judge, but the researches of properly qualified scholars. Every advance thus made in the sound criticism and interpretation of the Bible is an addition to our theological knowledge, and as such is calculated to exercise, through the teaching of the authorized ministers of the Church, a useful influence upon the general religious education of the community. Accordingly, the Church of England cultivates the use of all such aids for the explanation of Scripture. She takes pains to provide a learned clergy for the instruction of her poorer and more ignorant members. She does not encourage every uneducated person to search out for himself, unaided and unguided, a system of theology. In this department of biblical inquiry, the study of the ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Church is particularly valuable: since, living in times so much nearer to the Apostolic age, they had sources of information, upon many points connected with the sense of Scripture, open to them which have since disappeared in the lapse of centuries. It is to this kind of interpretation (Hermeneutical Tradition, as it has been termed), and not to any supposed Divine Tradition, supplemental to Scripture, and handed down in the Church, that such Patristic passages as the following relate:—"There are also many books written by our sainted masters, which, if any one will read over, he shall learn in a certain way the interpretation of the Scriptures, and obtain the knowledge of truth which he desires" (43). "Who that is mode-

(39) Jer. Taylor, *Dissuasive*. Part II. B. 1. § 2.

(40) The comparing spiritual things with spiritual was the rule of interpretation laid down by St. Paul (1 Cor. ii. 13). This he elsewhere terms the "analogy of faith" (*ἀναλογία πίστεως*).—Rom. xii. 6.

(41) ἡ ἀλήθεια δὲ εὐρίσκεται καὶ τῷ βιβαιοῦν ἕκαστον τῶν ἀποδεικνυμένων κατὰ τὰς γραφὰς ἐξ αὐτῶν πάλιν τῶν ὁμοίων γραφῶν.—Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Lib. vii.

(42) Magnifice igitur et salubriter Spiritus sanctus ita Scripturas sanctas modificavit, ut locis apertioribus fami occurreret, obscurioribus autem fastidia detergeret. Nihil enim fere de illis eruitur quod non planissime dictum alibi reperitur.—August. *De Doctr. Christ.* ii. c. 6. Bellarmine (*de V. D.* iii. 2) attempts to evade the force of this passage by the remark, that Augustine uses the word *fere*, "almost." But, admitting this qualification, Augustine elsewhere (*Contr. Donat. Ep.*, vel *de Unit. Eccl.* § 47. t. ix. 371) says that such obscure, ambiguous, or figurative passages are those which any person may interpret according to his own sense (*quæ quisque, sicut voluerit, interpretetur secundum sensum suum*). How does this help Bellarmine's cause?

(43) εἰσι δὲ καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν μακαρίων ἡμῶν διδασκάλων εἰς τὰ ταῦτα συνταχθέντες λόγοι· οἷς ἴαν τις ἐντύχοι εἰσέται μὲν πῶς τὴν τῶν γραφῶν ἑρμηνείαν, ἥδε ὁρίγεται γνώσεως τυχὴν δυνήσεται.—Athan. *Cont. Gent.* t. i. p. 1. Ed. Bened.

rately sane does not easily understand that the exposition of the Scriptures is to be sought for from those who profess to be the teachers of them?" (44) So, in like manner, the ancient Fathers and Doctors are continually appealed to and cited in the writings of the standard divines of the Church of England, as well as in the Book of Homilies which she has authorized; not indeed as an authority co-ordinate with Holy Scripture, but as a help to determine the right interpretation thereof in passages which need illustration in any of the points of view above noticed (45).

It is not necessary to consider in detail the proofs alleged by Roman Catholics in reference to the difficulties and obscurities of Scripture. The general answer above given is quite sufficient to obviate any objection to the Protestant Rule of Faith derived from this source. We will, however, conclude this article with a remark on the passage of St. Peter, above referred to—2 Pet. iii. 16. If there was then, or if it were intended that there should subsequently be, an infallible authority, to which the faithful might appeal, in order to clear up those things "hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction," surely here was a most fitting place to mention it; especially as, according to the Roman Catholic theory, the successors of St. Peter himself (the writer of these words) were to be the chief, if not the sole, depositaries of this infallible authority. But the Apostle does not give the remotest hint of any such thing. The only safeguard from error which he points out is one which not only every man may obtain without the interposition of any human agency external to himself, but which excludes the very possibility of such interposition—"You, therefore, brethren, knowing these things before, take heed lest, being led aside by the error of the unwise, you fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—Verses 17, 18. The safeguard recommended by St. Peter is cautious vigilance, with growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; not an appeal to a visible, living, infallible interpreter. The consideration of the remaining arguments in favour of a double Rule of Faith we must reserve to a future occasion.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Power's letter, Mr. Collette's, Philalethes's, and several other valuable communications, are necessarily postponed till our next, for want of room.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st. No anonymous letter can be attended to. Whatever is sent for insertion must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee for his good faith.

We would request our valued correspondents, both Roman Catholics and Protestants, to limit the length of their communications, and not to discuss a variety of distinct topics in one letter.

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The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, FEBRUARY, 1853.

CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

THERE is nothing more deservedly precious to mankind than liberty. We do not understand by liberty, as some do, the power of tyrannizing over others. We mean that well-regulated liberty which secures to every man the right of independent action, while respecting the rights of others; the right of every man to think, uncontrolled by others; the right of every man to have a free

conscience towards God. This is our notion of "civil and religious liberty."

In proportion as this is valuable to men, they ought to stand on their guard against all who claim a right to deprive them of this liberty.

We do not consider it a question whether the Pope possesses power to deprive men of civil and religious liberty. We are sure that all our Roman Catholic readers hold, as we do ourselves, that the Pope has no such power. We think it false and unjust to say that Roman Catholics are slaves, or that they are ready to yield up their civil and religious liberty to the Pope. So far as they submit to the Pope, out of conviction, they are acting freely; and we have no right to suppose that they are ready to submit to him farther than conviction leads them.

But it is often made a question *whether the Pope claims* for himself a power of forcing the actions and the consciences of men, against their own convictions. If he do make such a claim, all who value civil and religious liberty should stand on their guard against it.

Whether the Pope do really make such a claim, is a question that should be calmly and candidly considered; and we propose dispassionately to review what is said on both sides.

One side points to the Bull in which Pope Pius V. excommunicated and deposed Queen Elizabeth of England. We have only room to quote one sentence—"We likewise declare the said Elizabeth deprived of the pretended right to the kingdom above mentioned, and of all dominion, dignity, and privileges whatsoever; and that all the nobility and subjects of the said realm, who have sworn to her in any manner whatsoever, are for ever absolved from any such oath, and from all obligation of fidelity and allegiance. . . .

We likewise command all the nobility, subjects, and others above mentioned, that they do not presume to obey her orders, commands, or laws, for the future; and those who act otherwise are involved in the same sentence of excommunication."—Sanders de Schismate Anglicano, p. 423. Now, whereas the Pope, in his Bull, claims to do this in virtue of the authority committed to him by God, these persons consider this a clear claim on his part to overthrow men's civil rights and liberties.

These persons also appeal to the canon law (Decret. Greg. IX., book V., title VII., ch. 13), which gives the Pope power to compel all temporal princes to take an oath to exterminate heretics from their dominions. They appeal to Roman Catholic historians, that this was actually carried into effect by the extermination of a hundred thousand Albigenses and Waldenses in various countries; they appeal to the fact, that this law stands yet unrepealed, in the canon law of Rome, at this day; and they observe, which is certainly of great importance, that this is not only a part of their law, but it is actually a decree of a Pope (Innocent III.), and also a general council (Lateran IV.), acting together with the Pope: and since all Roman Catholics hold a decree of a Pope and a general council together to be infallible, they hold that this decree, being infallible, must also be unchangeable.

Now, these are weighty arguments; for all the facts stated here are certainly true. Yet, we ought candidly to consider what Roman Catholics say on the other side. And we believe their answer is generally this:—That Roman Catholics, at the present day, do not admit or believe in any such power of the Pope; that if Pope Pius IX. should now attempt to treat Queen Victoria as Pius V. treated Queen Elizabeth, they would think themselves bound to disobey the Pope, and to obey the Queen; and in like manner they say, if he should now order them to exterminate heretics, they should think themselves bound to disobey him. They say that their own conscience tells them that these things are wrong,

and that they would not believe that such things are right, even on infallible authority.

Now, we are satisfied that this is generally true of Roman Catholics at the present day, though it was not so formerly; and we are quite sure that it is true of all our readers. We only ask those who say this to observe, that since Popes and general councils have claimed to possess spiritual authority from God to do these things, it is clear that their claim to spiritual authority is not to be admitted, unless it can stand the test of truth and reason. And, to be consistent, they should admit no such claim, unless it can stand this test. It is clear that Popes and general councils are not sufficient witnesses themselves for the extent of their own powers. Infallible as they may be, they may claim, and have claimed, powers that were never given to them—powers that it is blasphemous and wicked to claim, as being given to them by God.

But all this, while it is a very sufficient answer as to what Roman Catholics believe, is no answer as to *what the Pope claims*. So, then, Roman Catholics only say that the Pope does not, in fact, now claim any power of interfering with men's civil and religious liberty. We have never heard Roman Catholics offer any *proof* of this—they only *say* it; and, with all respect to them, we think it possible that they may be mistaken. If they could show us that any Pope has ever *disclaimed* the power which his predecessors *claimed and exercised*, this would be conclusive with us; but we do not know of any such disclaimer having been produced, though, certainly, it is called for, while the Pope's canon law stands as it does.

Now, we have met with a document lately which seems to us to settle the question. It is an "allocation" by the present Pope, given in Consistory, dated September 27, 1852, published in the *Tablet* newspaper of November 6. It relates to the affairs of the republic of New Grenada, on the isthmus which connects North and South America. The following extracts will show what kind of laws the Pope complains of:—The Pope says that the Holy See had strongly remonstrated against a proposed law, "that emigrants to that country might have the public exercise of their worship, whatever it was; and, disapproving of the above decrees, has again and again insisted, that they should never be ratified." And a little further on he says—"Nor must we pass over in silence that, by the new constitution of that republic, enacted, in these recent times, among other things, the RIGHT ALSO OF FREE EDUCATION is defended, and liberty of all kinds is given unto all, so that each person may even PRINT and PUBLISH HIS THOUGHTS, and all kinds of monstrous portents of opinion, AND PROFESS PRIVATELY and PUBLICLY WHATEVER WORSHIP HE PLEASES." And on this the Pope observes, to the college of Cardinals whom he addressed—"You assuredly see, venerable brothers, how horrible and sacrilegious a war is proclaimed against the Catholic Church, by the rulers of the republic of New Grenada."

So, if the civil government of a country establishes by law the great bulwarks of civil and religious liberty, FREEDOM OF EDUCATION, LIBERTY OF THE PRESS, and the RIGHT OF WORSHIP according to each man's conscience, the Pope considers that "a sacrilegious war" against his authority!

And mark how he fights in such a war. Towards the end of the allocation he says—"We, raising, with Apostolic liberty, our pastoral voice in this your most illustrious assembly, do censure, condemn, and DECLARE UTTERLY NULL AND VOID all the aforesaid decrees, which have been there enacted by the civil power."

That is, when the civil power in a country passes laws that education and the press shall be free, and every man shall be left to worship God

(44) Quis, enim, mediocriter sanus non facile intelligat Scripturarum expositionem iis petendam esse, qui earum doctores se esse profitentur?—August. de Morib. Eccles. cap. i.

(45) In the Code of Canons passed by the English Convocation, in 1571, the following rule is prescribed to the clergy, in reference to their sermons, from which it appears how highly our Church estimates the value of Christian antiquity as an auxiliary in the interpretation of Scripture:—"But especially they [preachers] shall take heed that they deliver nothing from the pulpit, to be religiously held and believed by the people, but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testaments, and which the Catholic Fathers and ancient bishops have collected out of that very doctrine."—Cardwell, Synodal. I. 126.